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PANAMA INQUIRY SAID TO DISPUTE U.S. CONTENTIONS

Reported to Find Excessive
Shooting During Rioting
and Little Red Influence

Special to The New York Times
WASHINGTON, Feb. 16—An investigating committee of the Organization of American States was reported today to have found that Communist influence in last month's anti-United States riots in Panama was minimal.

It also found, after a week-long inquiry, that the firepower used by United States troops to keep Panamanian mobs from penetrating the Canal Zone was "disproportionate" to the threat posed to the security of the United States-occupied territory.

The five-nation committee also decided that the action of the United States forces, even if deemed excessive, did not justify Panama's charges of aggression.

The committee, still in Panama, was appointed by the Council of the inter-American organization to look into Panama's charges and to seek conciliation in the dispute.

[The head of the fact-finding group said in Panama that a formula for peace in the dispute would probably be presented to both sides Monday.]

A confidential account of the committee's investigation was received by Latin-American diplomats here over the weekend.

Council on Two Points
It concluded on two basic points, the committee found. These were that "Communist agents trained in Cuba played a preponderant role in inciting the riots and that United States troops had acted with great discipline and restraint during the riots of Jan. 9 and 10. The disorders stemmed from a dispute over the flying of United States and Panamanian flags in the Canal Zone.

These differences were not considered, however, as giving validity to Panama's charges that the United States had turned the incidents into a "deliberate armed aggression."

It is understood, therefore, that the committee in its final report to the Council will declare that there is no ground to invoke any of the sanctions provided by the Rio de Janeiro Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance, under which the inquiry is being carried out.

Instead the investigating team will now concentrate on finding some formula acceptable to the two sides so that they can resume normal diplomatic relations and seek to remove the irritants that led to the trouble.

In reviewing the causes of the clashes, which left 24 persons dead and several hundred wounded, the committee will emphasize the deep nationalistic

emotions that were spurred in Panama.

These were caused by the damage by United States high school students and adult residents of the Canal Zone of an order to fly the Panamanian flag alongside the Stars and Stripes at the Balboa High School. It was the ejection of Panamanian students demanding compliance with that order that touched off the riots.

Taking into account the 60-year-old history of dissatisfaction in Panama over the treaties giving the United States control of the Canal Zone, the committee considered it unrealistic for Washington to magnify the role of Communist agitation.

The group was also known to have supported the view that Washington's praise of the conduct of its troops in the Canal Zone did little to help ease tensions between the two countries.

Earlier efforts to mediate were made by an O. A. S. group known as the Inter-American Peace Committee. That group's efforts collapsed after the United States refused to guarantee to Panama that it would negotiate a new canal treaty and the Panamanian Government revived the charges of aggression it originally placed before the council Jan. 11.

Following a later Panamanian request for action under the Rio Treaty of 1947, the Council of the Organization of American States agreed Feb. 4 to constitute itself an "organ of consultation" on behalf of the Western Hemisphere foreign ministers. It then appointed a committee with wide powers to investigate and mediate the conflict.

The committee's chairman is Ambassador Juan I. Plate of Paraguay. Its other members are Brazil, Costa Rica, Mexico and Uruguay.

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